

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

TOWN HALL RENOVATIONS PROJECT BUILDING COMMITTEE

April 28, 2014

Town Hall – Lower Level Conference Room L101

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

- I. Call to Order – Chairperson Castelle called the meeting to order at 5:04 PM.
- II. Roll Call – Members present: Clarke Castelle, Chairperson; Myra Cohen, Daniel Dinunzio (arrived at 5:10 PM), Scott Soares, Paul Vessella, Bill DeBlasio (left at 5:48 PM), and Jen Win-Johnson (arrived at 5:08 PM). Others present: Members of the public; Stephen Woods, Mayor; John Salomone, Town Manager; Ed Moriarty, Downes Construction Company; Dave King, Kaestle Boos Associates; Bob Korpak, Director of Facilities Management; Bruce Till, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation; and Jeff Baron, Director of Administrative Services.
- III. Public Participation – Mady Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive. She has many questions. She has asked them before, but didn't receive answers. These typed questions were presented to Mr. Baron for distribution to the Committee with the minutes. She appreciates the time that the Committee has put in.

Eric O'Neil, 47 Kirkham Street. He encouraged the Committee to move forward and to get ahead of the needs of the building. It is a good plan. The Town is currently putting band aids on a bullet wound. The Committee needs to get ahead of the situation. As Athletic Director for Emmanuel Christian Academy, he uses the building for athletic programs. The Town will have to cancel programs if it can't stay ahead of the situation. He is a lifelong town resident. He feels this is the best course of action.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive. It appears the Helen Nelson Room is being moved to where L101 is currently located. Will the Town Plan and Zoning Commission meet in that room? Where will the Ambler Room be located?

John Slusarski, 40 Grandview Drive. What will happen to staff while the renovations are taking place? He has concerns about the way this project was run. He feels there are huge offices in the Board of Education, and that they do not need any more space. He hopes the Committee has a backup plan if the referendum does not pass.

Don Woods, 82 Ivy Lane. He is speaking as the Chairman of the Board of Parks and Recreation. It has taken a long time to get to this point. The Town Hall is in desperate shape. Parks and Recreation has dealt with leaks in the gym for years. He compared the current conditions with the benefits of the proposed community center plan. The current gym doesn't have air conditioning for the summer playground program. The current Teen Center doesn't have air conditioning or windows. Current parking is inconvenient, storage is inadequate, and there is a lack of appropriate space for classes. In the proposed Community Center, the lockers would be greatly improved and there would be better, more modern office space. There is currently no space for meetings or room rentals. The pre-school program could be moved to the new location. The project is needed. It would allow Parks and Recreation to serve the public's current needs at a higher level than at the present.

- IV. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes –Mr. DeBlasio made a motion that the minutes of the April 7, 2014 meeting be approved as written. Second by Mrs. Cohen. The motion passed unanimously.
- V. Discuss and Take Action on Project Recommendation – Mrs. Cohen made the following motion: Whereas the Town Hall Renovations Project Building Committee was established by Council resolution on April 29, 2008 and amended on October 28, 2008, January 11, 2011, May 22, 2012, and November 13, 2012 as hereby resolutions attached represent;
And whereas, the charge of the Town Hall Renovations Project Building Committee was established on April 29, 2008 and amended on October 28, 2008, January 11, 2011, May 22, 2012 and November 13, 2012 which the attached represent;
And whereas, the Town Hall Renovations Project Building Committee, in accordance with Chapter 8, Article 10 of the project building committee ordinance, recommends that the Town Hall project now be considered by the Newington Town Council;
And whereas, the project cost estimate for the Town Hall renovations project is hereby attached as recommended by the Town Hall Renovations Project Building Committee;
And whereas, the preliminary plans for the Town Hall renovations project are hereby attached;
Now therefore be resolved that the Town Hall Renovations Project Building Committee recommends to the Newington Town Council the project cost estimates and preliminary plans, as attached.
Mr. Soares provided a second to the motion. Mr. Baron provided the preliminary cost estimates. The preliminary plans were distributed prior to the start of the meeting. Discussion: Mrs. Cohen asked that the preliminary cost estimates be changed to include the amounts that have already been spent. Mr. Baron distributed a preliminary cost estimate that included amounts already expended or encumbered. Otherwise, the dollar amounts are the same as was presented at earlier meetings. Mrs. Cohen requested that the attachments to

the motion be forwarded to the Town Council immediately, if the motion is approved. Mr. Salomone has suggested that this matter be placed on the Town Council's agenda for the May 13th meeting. Consideration by the Town Council would include a presentation from Mr. Moriarty and Mr. King. Mrs. Cohen thanked the Chairperson and the Town Manager for the large size set of plans that she received. These plans have been revised to include changes in the rest room locations on the Main Level of Town Hall. She also stated that a big issue has been cost. The Town has a cap to its bonded debt and to its annual Capital Improvement Plan projects. This project will not affect the mill rate. It will postpone other projects that are in the hopper waiting to be done. The Town Hall has been a priority item for many years, and has been postponed in favor of other projects. This project really has to go forward. She supports the project wholeheartedly. The project will be complicated. The Committee will be relying on those that are in charge of the project. The Committee needs to move forward.

Chairperson Castelle noted that the charge of the Building Committee ordinance was to submit preliminary plans and cost estimates. The cost estimates for soft costs were received by the Committee on April 7th and the construction plans and costs on March 17th. Mr. Dinunzio stated that, looking at cost, he had come across an article from last March, when former Chairperson McBride stated that the costs were not set in stone and that the plans could change. Chairperson Castelle stated that the cost increase for the Town Hall was a bitter pill to swallow. Compared with other surrounding Towns, Newington's debt service is very low. Newington has very modest debt for a town this size. Mr. Dinunzio observed that now is a good time to bond. The plans and cost estimates are preliminary. They are a step in the right direction. If the project is defeated, the Committee is back to square one.

Mr. Salomone gave a brief overview of the procedure moving forward. The Building Committee has a charge which has evolved as priorities have been determined. The Town Council will determine the final scope of the project. The Committee will work on the final design after funding is in place and a referendum has passed. There could also be non-bonding components melded in. Financing is a Town Council decision. Then the Town Council would set a referendum date. There would then be a series of meetings to answer questions about the project, and a mailing to explain the project to voters. The Committee will start work on the project again after a referendum passes, to recommend a final design. The Town Council will award bids and contracts. The Chair asked if the project would have to be referred to the Board of Education and the Board of Parks and Recreation. The ordinance says that the project be referred to the requesting agency. In this case, that would be the Town Council. Both boards had input through their representatives on the Building Committee. Mrs. Cohen noted that she had reviewed the proposed plans for the main and lower levels of Town Hall in depth. Other than the rest rooms that were changed, other potential changes that she has raised can be

relayed as options with the Town Council when it reviews the plans. The plans are subject to change. They constitute a dynamic document.

A vote was then called for on the motion. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 7 YES to 0 NO.

VI. Other Business Pertinent to the Committee – None.

VII. Public Participation – Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive. As a follow up to Ms. Kenny's handout, she wants to know what the master plan is. She is hoping their questions will be answered. They will keep asking the questions until they get answers. What is happening with the library and the bus garage looking forward, what plans for the next five years? She is hoping there is a master plan for the whole area and what the costs will be. She would like to see a vision for the next five to ten years.

Michael J. Fox, 1901 Main Street. He agrees with Ms. Lyons. He also would like to know the overall plan for the Town Hall campus. He hasn't seen a copy of the plans for this project. His main concern is that offices be up front and easy to get to. As Chair of the Environmental Quality Commission, the environment is also a concern. The building will be gutted. The project will take care of mold and asbestos. He congratulated the Chair and the Committee.

Mady Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive. On the plans of the Parks and Recreation building, there is nothing on them for meeting rooms. There is damage from use at various locations around town. What will happen if something occurs that cannot be postponed?

VIII. Response to Public Participation – Mrs. Cohen stated that the Town has a rainy day fund to cover emergencies. The Mayor noted that a number of these questions should be addressed to the Town Council. Even at the peak of borrowing, 50% would be available to fund the pay as you go portion of the Capital Improvement Plan. The Capital Improvement Plan is the Town's five year plan. The Helen Nelson Room has been shared with the Town throughout the years, and that is not expected to change. Mr. Baron was directed to distribute Ms. Kenny's questions with the minutes of this meeting.

IX. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 5:58 PM.